

CHINESE LANGUAGE.

SOME OF THE CURIOSITIES OF THE
"EAR SPLITTING JARGON."

Chinese say it has an affinity with the Notes of Birds—No Alphabet and No Parts of Speech—Some Amusing Examples of Chinese Talk.

The superficial observer often refers to the Chinese spoken speech as an "ear splitting jargon" and to the written speech as "hieroglyphics." Frequent visitors to any "Chinese quarter," notably a large "Chinatown" like that of Los Angeles, will soon become so familiar with this so-called jargon as to note that it is far more musical than the English speech. Musicians are authority for the statement that the Chinese language has more affinity (when spoken) with the notes of birds than with the tones of any other language. This is perhaps because the Chinese, having no alphabet, must have many tone combinations to give the various expressions and meanings to the thousands of characters.

Having no alphabet, the Chinese language has more symbols than all of the alphabets in the universe combined, and there are more tone combinations for the expression of those symbols than in all other tongues. Each tone is attached to a character, and one character is made to mean several different things, according to the tone used. In Chinese the tone gives the meaning. A word spoken with a falling inflection means one thing, and quite another when spoken with a rising inflection. We often hear a Chinaman, as he walks along the street talking to his companion, utter a word in a falling inflection which sounds like "go." This means "I." He is talking of himself—perhaps saying how great he thinks himself to be. But if he draws out the sound long and even he is calling some hoodlum a "goose." He gives the falling inflection to the first syllable, and the rising inflection to the last, and in a rather musical voice. This would be a difficult feat for an American.

No matter in what mood he may be, he may not and perhaps cannot change the accent. The voice may be louder or in a minor key, but the tones are as inflexible as written words and must be so used, or the exact meaning is lost. All the expressions of human passions—laughter or sorrow—must be expressed by the same inflexible words and precise accents. There are only five tones in the Chinese voice, but as every word has all of its syllables accented there are 25 permutations, and these are almost always in constant use, even in ordinary conversation. A question may be asked with or without a rising inflection, according to the word used.

Chinese adjectives are nouns. For "many thanks" it is "thank thank." A "goodman" is "goodness man." Sometimes a noun is formed of a noun and a verb, as "barber," whom they call "shave-head teacher." The verbs have neither mood nor tense.

And when your laundryman wishes to tell you that "I have washed" he says, "I pass over wash." Their adverbs are mostly formed by joining together nouns and verbs, as "finish day" for "yesterday." To cook is to "eat rice." Every noun is plural and includes all there is of that article, unless it is limited by the expression "one piece," as "one piece house." Instead of "wife and children" they express "family and wife."

The word woman means "father man." If repeated, it signifies "solding." The noun always remains in the same shape, and the verb has but one form instead of the many known to the English language. The Chinese language has no declensions, subjunctions, moods, tenses, prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, first, second and third persons, no singular and plural, and no gender except by the addition of a few participles in rare instances. It is evidently simple and easy to learn, one of the simplest and most curious things about it being, as above stated, that every noun, unless qualified otherwise, is plural.

There are about 60,000 characters used in the Chinese language proper, but the average Chinaman no more learns all of those characters than the everyday American learns the 100,000 words in the English language. The Chinaman, however, learns on the average more than does an American in a similar position in life. A Chinaman who can neither read nor write is a rarity. Chinese is not a syllabic language, as many suppose, and it is impossible to utter in Chinese any but the shortest sentences in monosyllables.

In writing the Chinaman makes one complicated but integral character for each word, but that word may be properly spoken in two, three or four syllables. His syllables are divided by no longer intervals than are his words, and that is what makes his language sound to a foreigner like a singsong jargon. We do not know whether he is telling a story or attempting a song. The Chinese perhaps think the same thing of an American, who bites off his words and swallows them or telescopes one into another.

Business men in this city thrown in contact with Chinese merchants who speak pure Chinese say that it is not difficult to learn. Instead of 26 letters, not including the useless &, the Chinese have 500 or 600 syllables, and these are combined into various forms to make the 60,000 words in their "dictionary." These syllables vary in meaning according to the tone in which they are spoken or the strokes used in writing them.—Los Angeles Cor. New York Post.

Starvation Among the Rich.
Death by starvation is a thing not restricted to periods of business depression nor to the poor. Perhaps there are more ill-nourished people in proportion among the rich than among the poor. The number of persons that seek relief from threatened starvation in the exclusive milk diet is constantly on the increase, but it is a remedy almost of necessity confined to those who have sufficient control over their own doings to take a meal every hour and a half, a thing hardly consistent with earning a living at manual labor.—Philadelphia Press.

ALL ABOUT PENS.

An Interesting Account of Their Invention and Evolution.

Sharp pointed bodkins, made of bronze, of steel or of iron, were the first pens, and they were used for cutting out letters and hieroglyphics in the limestone, sandstone or slate of eastern countries. Such pens were also used for writing on Assyrian tablets. The tablets were made of soft clay, and after receiving inscriptions were dried in the sun or baked in the fire.

In the far east and in Egypt the camel's hair pencil soon took the place of the metal bodkin. With the pencil letters were painted on the skins of animals and the bark of trees, in much the same manner that the Chinese draw them on paper at the present day.

In Persia, Greece and Syria wax and leaden tablets came into use, and the stylus became the popular pen. The stylus was made of bone, ivory or metal, with one end pointed and the other flattened. The flattened end was used to erase errors made in writing.

The use of parchment and papyrus, however, called for a more flexible pen than either the bodkin or the stylus, so reed pens were invented. For making these pens a peculiar kind of reed was used, which was shaped to a point and split, similar to the pens now in use.

In A. D. 553 it was discovered that quills made much better pens than reeds. The quills of the goose, the swan and the crow were used principally. Several centuries later, when writing paper was introduced into England, the quill pen was still the favorite writing instrument. However, the quill pens had been greatly improved, and those from Russia and Holland were excellent.

In the early part of the present century there was a demand for something better and more durable than quill pens. Accordingly a great many experiments were made with horn, glass, tortoise shell and finally with steel, silver and gold. It was soon found that pens made of horn and tortoise shell softened under the action of the ink and were not so good as quill pens. Nor were the silver pens very good. They were too elastic and too easily worn at the points.

In 1803 steel was tried in Wile's barrel pens, but being poorly made and very expensive they were not a success. At Birmingham, England, in 1820 the manufacture of steel pens began in earnest, and they proved to be excellent. The first gross of steel pens sold in Birmingham brought \$36 at wholesale.

They were soon manufactured in great numbers and have been getting better and cheaper all the time, until now we can buy for a trifle the best steel pen made. Europe has always excelled in the manufacture of steel pens, and America is noted for the manufacture of gold pens.—Philadelphia Times.

Adapted Food in Paris.

In the guise of fine brandy have we not drunk alcohol made from potatoes, added to by sulphuric acid, ammonia or

water soap, colored with nugaalis or carmel, and owing its savor to insect powder, ginger and pimento put into it profusely? As for rum, it is colored with prunes or with tar, and savor is given by adding the raspings of tanned leather. In beer, instead of hops we find aloes, gentian, centaury and ox bile. In the milk we drink there are water, whites of eggs, brown sugar, rice, essence of carrots and the brains of animals. Sometimes there is even a little real milk drawn from a real, live cow.

For almost nothing you can have a superb box of canned lobsters, but in the sheet iron boxes that you buy you will only find cuttle fish. Tainted salmon, trout and other "denizens of the sea" are embalmed by injecting into them salts or zinc. The scales are made fresh again by rubbing them with vaseline, and the fins by rubbing them with fresh blood. Gingerbread has for base potassium or soap, cream has vaseline added and is guaranteed to never spoil, and there are plenty of preserves into which not one bit of fruit has ever entered of which they bear the name. Take a quantity of glucose, mix with it sulphuric acid or amidon, give it flavor with special ethers, cover the whole with a fine label and gain a respectable and respected fortune.

In chicory, the coffee of the poor, is found the raspings of carrots, of beans, of glands, of torified bread, of beet pulp, of brick dust and of other.—Letter in New Orleans Picayune.

A Thoroughly Honest Man

"In conversation with a politician," said a lawyer to me, "I mentioned the name of a certain gentleman. 'Now, there,' said the politician, 'is as honest a man as there is in town. Yes, sir, I tell you, he is the straightest man I know. He is white, he is. You need never be afraid of him beating you, for he is honest to the backbone. When you buy his vote, you may be sure he will do as he promises. If he happens to find out that he cannot carry out his contract, why, he won't pocket your money and say nothing. No, sir, he will give you your money back to you every time. Now, that is what I call an honest man.'"

Stale Bread.

It is generally supposed that the staleness of bread arises from its becoming actually drier by the gradual loss of water, but this is not the case. Stale bread contains almost exactly the same proportion of water as new bread after it has become completely cold. The change is merely in the internal arrangements of the molecules of the bread. A proof of this is that if we put a stale loaf into a closely covered tin, expose it for half an hour or an hour to a heat not exceeding that of boiling water and then allowing it to cool, it will be restored in appearance and properties to the state of the new bread.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Hard to Please.

Landlady—This is a very bright, pleasant room; and—
Mr. Henpeck—Well, I'll have to see my wife first, for she may want a room where she can have the morning sun in the afternoon.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

TRANSFORMATION.

The morning came as strange and white And still as death doth come. Almost it was as though the earth had slept And woke to find herself a ghost.

Close, oh, so close, to her changed face The sky drew down! How could she know Herself as she lay shrouded there The white wonder of the snow?—Mary N. Bradford in Donohoe's Magazine.

The Elder Dumas.

Of his Sheridan-like dealings with tradesmen an anecdote is told. During a scarcity of ice a neighbor of Dumas sent to a dealer for some and was told that the limited stock on hand was kept for the use of the famous author. Then the gentleman sent again and bade his servant ask for the ice in the name of M. Dumas. The plan succeeded. The ice was given, and the servant put down the money on the counter. "Ah," cried the tradesman, "give me back that ice! Now I know that you are not from M. Dumas. He never pays ready money."

"My father," said M. Dumas fils, "once told me that if he could portion out a new life he would be a handsome woman till 80, a victorious general from 30 to 50 and a cardinal in his old age." Dumas, as he related this parental desire, glanced toward Rossini and added: "I should prefer to close my life as an illustrious composer. Mon cher Rossini, when you enter a room, the very laquer pronounces your name with pride as he announces you."

Then turning to the company he continued: "Announce, for instance, M. le Duc d'Anjou and Signor Rossini at the same moment and see on which side all heads and all hearts will incline first. All eyes would be on the great musician who created 'Il Barbiere de Seviglia.' And then we all filled our glasses with champagne of the vintage of 1811 and drank the health of Rossini. The old composer did not rise, but his face broke out into voluminous smiles as he shook the hand of the author of 'La Dame Aux Camelias.'—Philadelphia Times.

Pompeian Business Notes.

A number of business announcements are to be found at Pompeii, that brisk little city to whose daily life the energy of Vesuvius has lent a kind of immortality. Here we get a large number of miscellaneous inscriptions dealing with matters of daily life, announcements of forthcoming gladiatorial games, edicts of magistrates, wine sellers' attempts to captivate customers, rewards for lost or stolen property, houses for sale or to be let and other things of that sort.

We learn from one announcement that a glass of wine could be got for 1 as—about 3 farthings—while for 4 asses one could drink real Falernian. Another inscription informs us that a denarius—about 7½ pence—was to be paid for washing a tunic, and the bath of April, is carefully washed by a writer. Whether she was a washer or the owner of the bath is not decided, but it seems as if she was in the habit of washing account on the walls of her house.

There are several such inscriptions on the same wall of this particular house, all dated—the 20th of April, a "tunic and pallium" on the 7th of May, an article which need not be particularized, while on the day following two tunics are scored.—Macmillan's Magazine.

Dishes and Platters of Gold.

Queen Victoria's wonderful set of table furniture is kept in two fireproof chambers and is said to represent a cash value of £20,000,000. Among it is the golden table service made for George VI, calculated for 130 guests and containing the famous crystal champagne cooler which is large enough for a bathtub. There are many pieces in it that formerly belonged to Queen Elizabeth, besides splendid solid gold vessels from India, Siam and China. The pride of the collection is a teacup once owned by Charles XII and a gold peacock made for George III at a cost of £40,000.—St. Louis Republic.

A Difficult Feat.

A member of a Houston volunteer fire company did not appear at the scene of the conflagration until after the fire was under control. The chief of the fire department reproached him bitterly for his neglect of duty.

"It's not my fault," replied the fireman. "I live quite a distance from the fire."

"That's no excuse. You must move nearer to the next fire."—Texas Siftings.

Very Delicate.

"So you proposed to Miss Jingleblit?"
"Yes."
"And she refused you?"
"Yes."
"Perhaps it was a hasty answer?"
"No. She took care that it shouldn't be. She sent it by a messenger boy."—Washington Star.

It is seldom that wood which has grown more than 4,000 years before the Christian era is used in the construction of a present day residence, and yet this really happened recently in Edinburgh, where a mantelpiece was fashioned from wood said to be 6,000 years old.

The old fashion of using the candied petals of the orange blossom in tea seems to be almost forgotten. If a few of the candied petals be put into the tea before it is steeped, they give it a flavor noticeably peculiar, but once esteemed very fine.

Tommy heard his mother call an insect that was flying around them the darning needle. The next day he said, "Mamma, were those funny things we saw yesterday safety pins?"

The title mayor comes from the French and originally signified "one who keeps guard." He was the head steward of a city, administering its affairs in the name of the king.

Statistics show that mild winters are much more conducive to health than severe ones.

"What I Eat Does Me No Good."

How often this expression is heard! Life-destroying dyspepsia has hold on you when you feel thus, and should not be trifled with. There is but one remedy that can permanently cure you, Dr. David Kennedy's Favorite Remedy, made at Rondout, N. Y., a vegetable compound endorsed by the medical profession. Druggists sell it.—Advt.

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